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ABSTRACT

A chapter from the forthcoming book, "Practitioners' Guide to Education for Working Adults," describes a year-long study to explore the low utilization of tuition aid plans in three unionized companies. The research has shown that the use of tuition aid programs is in inverse ratio to need. Workers who tend to utilize tuition aid are those who have the most education and hold the best paid, highest skilled jobs with the greatest opportunity for advancement. Since women are clustered in low wage, low skill jobs they tend to be those who use this benefit least of all. The study showed, however, that working women no longer put personal development first as a reason for returning to school, her interest now is in acquiring job-related skills leading to promotion. Discouragement about the rewards of extra effort seems a prime reason why men and women do not use tuition aid benefits. Changes in the tuition aid programs, such as greater cost sharing, rearranging work schedules, and career counseling, are recommended. (Author/PHR)

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UTILIZATION OF NEGOTIATED TUITION AID BENEFITS

by

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UTILIZATION OF NEGOTIATED TUITION AID BENEFITS

A Summary of the Study WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? A Study of the Underutilization of Tuition Aid Plans.

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November, 1978

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Summary of WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? A Study of the Underutilization of Tuition Aid Plans. From the forthcoming book, PRACTITIONERS' GUIDE TO EDUCATION FOR WORKING ADULTS, AS DEVELOPED THROUGH PROGRAMS FOR LABOR UNION WOMEN, edited and with an introduction by Barbara M. Wertheimer and Anne H. Nelson, Institute for Education and Research on Women and Work, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University.

Abstract

The Institute for Education and Research on Women and Work, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, presents for advance reading this chapter from the forthcoming Practioners' Guide to Education for Working Adults, describing its year-long study to explore the low utilization of tuition aid plans in three unionized companies.

This research was prompted by the knowledge that a growing number of companies offer tuition aid programs; that many unions have negotiated such programs as fringe benefits; and that, overall, tuition assistance is little used by union members. Nationally, utilization is as low as five percent of all those eligible. Many millions of dollars are available for education (workers who use these plans). Why do they not? Why are women in particular the lowest users? What kinds of programmatic remedies could increase utilization?

Abramovitz's study reconfirms that those who have, get. Program use is in inverse ratio to need. Workers who tend to utilize tuition aid are those who have the most education and hold the best paid, highest skilled jobs with the greatest opportunity for advancement. It is men and women in the low paid, low skill, low status occupation, those with the least education, who most are absent when plan users are counted. Not surprisingly, since women are clustered in low wage, low skill jobs, they tend to be those who use this benefit least of all.

* Mimi Abramovitz, Project Researcher for the Study "Where Are The Women". is a DSW candidate at the Columbia School of Social Work and Lecturer, New York University. For a full discussion of the study summarized here, the book length report, WHERE ARE THE WOMEN is available from the Institute for Education and Research on Women and Work, 7 East 43 Street, New York 10017. ($5.00)

However, one of the study findings reveals that today's working woman no longer puts personal development first as a reason for returning to school, as several studies heretofor have found. Her interest, like that of men, is now in job-related results, specifically upgrading and promotions. But the study finds that only a small percentage of those who do return to school for further education actually achieve this upgrading. Discouragement about the rewards for the extra effort required to return to school seems a prime reason why men and women do not use tuition aid benefits.

Workplace status is not the only reason, however, why women are high non-users. Regardless of age, race, education, skill level, or wage group, the study found women are lower users than men. Other factors for non-use are discussed in this chapter.

The good news, however, is that the research uncovered an untapped pool of interested workers: nearly 80 per cent of those who had never used a tuition aid program expressed this interest. Further, more than one out of every four who had ever used the program had continued or planned to continue in shcool. Education is addictive. A real plus for unions is the finding that those who make use of tuition aid plans are more involved union members.

Practical dilemmas impede implementation of the programmatic remedies that Abramovitz suggests. These are discussed within the context of the specific, logical next steps that companies, unions and educational institutions might take should they want to increase utilization of tuition aid.

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INTRODUCTION

College seats left empty by declining student enrollments are being filled by adults who are returning to school in unprecedented numbers, (including many women over age 35). At the same time that colleges and universities are wooing this student group, increasing educational costs have made financial assistance for college a national issue.* Not surprisingly, this has generated heightened interest in job-related educational benefits such as tuition aid programs which can finance access to higher education for the working adult.

A company tuition aid plan is a job-related fringe benefit which reimburses tuition and sometimes other expenses for education pursued after work hours. The plans vary in the amount refunded, the types of courses covered, and the conditions for plan participation. Initially provided only for management employees, tuition refund programs today are available to millions of rank and file workers as company-sponsored, or union negotiated-benefits. A 1974-75 Conference Board survey found that of 610 companies it polled, 89% had some form of tuition aid plan (1) Increasingly, Tuition aid plans are union negotiated . The Bureau of Labor Statistics in its 1974 survey of Major Collective Bargaining Agreements reported 717 education and training provisions, of which 60 were tuition aid plans. (2) The increasing availability of this educational benefit to the contrary, few workers use the program. According to the Conference Board, only five percent of the 3.6 million eligible workers participated in the 155 plans it surveyed in 1970. (3) Despite the lower wages of women workers, the high cost of tuition, and the rising educational requirements for many jobs, women use tuition aid considerably less than men. These low utilization rates mean that millions of dollars for tuition are available but untapped.

Given the attractiveness of the benefit and the high cost of education, why are tuition aid programs so underutilized? The long standing concern of labor educators in expanding educational opportunities for workers has stimulated interest in facilitating greater use of tuition aid programs.

*Tuition tax credits proposed by the Carter Administration have become a topic of widespread debate.

Many plans exclude union related courses from reimbursement provisions. The recent and growing trend toward awarding college credit for labor studies should qualify more labor related courses for tuition refunds. Labor educators are encouraging unions to press for benefits broad enough to include not only courses that are job-related, but also those of immediate interest to workers as trade unionists. Labor educators can assist further widening of educational opportunities by conducting applied research to learn why tuition aid is under-used, and by suggesting programmatic remedies to overcome the barriers such reasearch uncovers.

"WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? A STUDY OF THE UNDERUTILIZATION OF TUITION REFUND PLANS."

A year long investigation, "Where Are The Women?" was undertaken in 1977 by the Institute for Education and Research on Women and Work of Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, with a grant from the Rockefeller Family Fund. The purpose of the study was straightforward: to examine and determine the reasons for low utilization of tuition aid and to design programs to increase worker use of this fringe benefit. Since women workers are the lowest users, particular attention would be given to their reasons. But as this chapter will show, barriers to use of tuition aid may be identified easily, while practical dilemmas complicate the implementation of remedies. Indeed, the study highlights the difficulties that management, labor and educational institutions must resolve if utilization of tuition aid monies is to be increased.

Members of three unions employed at three different companies* were surveyed to learn what keeps workers, especially women, from fuller participation in tuition aid programs. Questionnaires completed by the nearly 1000 union members ** and interviews with union and company officials provided information about:

1) Tuition aid utilization rates
2) Characteristics of users and non-users
3) Reasons for plan use
4) Barriers to utilization.

* Locals 440, 445, 450, International Union of Electrical Employees, AFL-CIO-Sperry Rand Corporation; Local 1153, Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO - Longlines epartment, American Telegraph and Telephone; Westchester Local, Telephone, Traffic Union, - New York Tele-

** Because the study included only three companies and produced a response rate of 27.3%, generalizations must be made cautiously. However, the large number of respondents permint confidence in the study findings.

Based on these findings, recommendations to help overcome the barriers have been developed. It is hoped that the programmatic suggestions not only will be of interest to labor educators, but also that they will stimulate further discussion of the problem and of areas where further research is needed.

FINDINGS

A. UTILIZATION

Use of tuition aid plans by all workers, blue collar or white collar, men or women, minority or white, is low. Non-users (69%) outnumber those who have ever used tuition aid plans (31%) by more than two to one.* The pattern of low use occurs at each of the three participating companies even though the majority of non-users (close to 80%) express an interest in the program.** This high level of interest among non-users points to the presence of barriers.

B. USERS AND NON-USERS COMPARED

Although overall use of tuition aid is low, certain groups of workers use the program more than others. Use is greatest among men, workers under age 45, white workers, more educated workers, more skilled workers, workers in higher paid jobs. Low paid, low skilled and less educated workers have the lowest utilization rates. These disadvantaged workers face disincentives to tuition aid use because of their location in the occupation hierarchy of the workplace. (The reader is referred to the section on Socioeconomic Barriers).

The strong relationship between socioeconomic status and use of tuition aid holds for men and women alike. Disadvantaged workers, both male and female, face disincentives to tuition aid use and are low users. Nonetheless, women's use of tuition aid is not only low (16%) but falls far below that of men (39.8%). In part this is due to the heavy concentration of women among the disadvantaged workers. Considerably more women than men in the companies studied here had fewer years of education, were less skilled and received low wages.*

*These utilization rates reflect both past and present use of tuition aid and therefore are higher than they would be if only current use was discussed.

** For data not reported here because of space limitations, see final report of the study: "Where Are The Women?" A Study of the Underutilization of Tuition Refund Plans, by Mimi Abramovitz. Copies available from the Institute for Education and Research on Women and Work, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, 7 East 43 Street, New York, N.Y. 10017 260 pages ($5.00)

However, women's use of tuition aid, lower than that of men in all age, race, education, skill level and wage groups, suggests that women's disadvantaged workplace status is not the whole story. Indeed, the study points up that use of tuition aid also reflects family roles and responsibilities. Men who are married, who have larger families and younger children use tuition aid more than those with fewer responsibilities; differences in marital status, family size and children's age have minimal effect on women's use of tuition aid. It is uniformly low.

Family obligations appear to stimulate use of tuition aid among men who are primary breadwinners. Even though this involves combining full-time work and parenting with school attendance, men seek additional education to improve job and income status. For women, full-time employment plus household and childrearing tasks leave little time or energy for the pursuit of education. Doubly deterred by an unfavorable relationship to the workplace and by traditional sex-roles within the family, how women manage to return to school at all, might well be the subject for future research!

C. REASONS FOR USE

In the study "Where Are The Women," workers were found to use tuition aid benefits primarily for job improvement and advancement. Many go back to school to secure an upgrading or promotion, to improve job skills and or to earn more money. While the similarity of male and female interest in job gains is striking, there are also some differences between the sexes. More women than men seek education for personal development, while more men than women use tuition aid to pursue a degree and to earn more money.

The subjects that workers study further demonstrate their strong interest in job gains. Most select courses in areas where new job openings are believed to exist. For example, 47% of the men and 37% of the women in this study want to learn computer skills, the area of greatest job expansion at each company studied. Equal proportions (30%) of men and women express interest in management training. Courses permitting advancement in a worker's current job also are popular. However, these choices tend to reflect the impact of the sex-segregated occupational structure. More men want to learn craft skills (welding, machine repair, electronics); more women choose clerical skills (typing, bookkeeping, accounting.) Beyond job improvement, workers return to school to obtain a college or technical degree and for reasons of personal development.

*Some of the differences are especially dramatic. Over 60% of the women, but only 28% of the men have a high school diploma or less. Twice as many men (55%) as women (23%) have had some college. Only 7% of the women compared to 59% of the men are in highly skilled jobs; only 16% of the women but more than 60% of the men earn over $260 a week.

While other studies show that men seek education for practical, job related reasons and women for personal and social reasons (4), our findings do not support such a sharp distinction. Although more women than men do use tuition aid for social personal reasons, job improvement and advancement is the top ranked (i.e. most frequently cited) reason for use of tuition aid by women and men alike. Women are as concerned as men with practical, job related benefits. Women's interest in job advancement may be seen as a reflection not only of the low status of the jobs they now hold, but also of the recognition of their permanance in the labor force. The realities of low pay and job status and this long-term employment plus the increased numbers of women over age 25 joining the part-time student body underscore the need to remove barriers that deter working women's use of tuition aid plans. Easier access to higher education can help women move out of sex-stereotyped jobs and prepare them for community and union leadership roles.

D. BARRIERS

Barriers to tuition aid use fall into three categories:

1) Socioeconomic barriers
2) Personal barriers, reported by workers themselves (e.g. barriers relating to the tuition aid program, to family, and to other educational considerations.)
3) Barriers stemming from unmet expectations

1. Socioeconomic Barriers. Socioeconomic characteristics largely determine who does and does not use tuition aid. These include barriers to job advancement that are built into the internal labor market of companies and operate against worker use of tuition aid. The internal labor market, a pyramid with fewer good jobs at the top and an increasing number of poor jobs at the bottom, permits promotion for only a minority of those workers who pursue additional education. Opportunities also are limited because the conditions for job entry and promotion are governed by legal, administrative and trade union arrangements more than by educational attainment. Race, age and sex discrimination present additional obstacles. Thus disadvantaged workers, less likely to be rewarded on the job for more education, find fewer incentives for using tuition aid programs.

2. Personal Worker-Reported Barriers. Non-users of tuition aid were asked to identify which plan and personal barriers kept them from using the program.

The barriers cited most frequently by all workers includes:

Barriers	percent
1. Inability to afford the costs of going to school	30.7
2. Preference for other activities	29.2

* Total is more than 100% due to multiple choices

Barriers	percent
3. Fear of returning to school	25.7
4. The restriction of tuition refunds to job-related courses	25.6
5. Uncertain educational interests	24.9
6. The view that there is no benefit from more education	24.0
7. The requirement that workers pay tuition costs in advance of reimbursement	23.4
8. Fatigue	23.4
9. Work schedules (working overtime, a non-day shift or a second job)	21.6
10. The view that education is no help on the job	20.1
11. Other tuition aid program factors (red tape, course prerequisites not covered)	19.5

These barriers effect workers regardless of sex, age, education, wage or skill levels.

Contrary to expectations, more than one-half of these barriers were reported by similar proportions of women and men. (Barriers # 1, 2, 7, 9, 10 and 11). This parallels the finding reported above that regardless of sex, people who share low job status share low use of tuition aid. Together these show that when the conditions of women and men are similar, so is their response.

While sex-based differences do not fully explain tuition aid use patterns, women do cite certain barriers more often than men. The key barriers for women include:

Barrier	percent
1. Fear of returning to school after being out too long	32.3
2. Fatigue	28.5
3. Uncertain education goals	28.0
4. Transportation problems (no transportation, unsafe to travel alone at night)	27.2
5. Lack of confidence in own ability	16.6
6. Child care	12.3

Those barriers cited more frequently by men than women include:

1. Restriction of tuition aid to job related courses	30.5
2. The view that there is no benefit from returning to school	28.7

Although the same barriers rank high at each of the three participating companies, the most critical, i.e. top-ranked, barrier differs. This reflects the particular tuition aid program at each worksite.

* Total is more than 100% due to multiple choices

Finally , although lack of information about tuition aid* was not among the most frequently mentioned barriers, low skilled, low paid workers more than others are deterred for this reason.

3. Barriers Related to Unmet Expectations. What evolves from program use is quite different from the results that workers indicate they seek. Many worker expectations are not met. For example, 55% of women as well as men use tuition aid for education to secure an upgrading or promotion. Only 30% of the men and 14% of the women cite upgrading/promotion as an effect of program use.

Similar discrepancies appear for each of the other reported reasons and effects. This divergence between goals and outcomes needs further exploration as a factor in overall low use of tuition aid programs. It reflects a tension between what workers most want (job advancement), the warning of most tuition aid programs (no advancement promised), and the structure and operation of the internal labor market (fewer jobs available as one tries to move up the occupational pyramid).

DILEMMAS

Three major types of barriers been identified. Within each category, most are amenable to programmatic remedy provided that companies, unions and educational institutions move to adopt policies that encourage maximum use of tuition aid. If tuition aid is to become a priority, however, the parties involved must first deal with several built-in contradictions.

Company. Existing promotion and training policies inhibit active company encouragement of tuition aid use.

1) Companies are more likely to promote workers on the basis of seniority and job performance than on outside educational attainment.
2) Specific training needs are usually met through on-the-job and in-house training programs.
3) The shortage of higher level job openings, exacerbated by the current recession, make companies reluctant to raise job mobility aspirations. Nonetheless, management continues to need a skilled and productive workforce; to maintain a pool of qualified and promotable workers; and to look for more women available from within to meet affirmative action goals. In addition, education is considered a motivator and motivated employees make better workers.

* "Don't know if I'm eligible", "don't know who or where to ask about the program","didn't know program existed".

Union. Union practices and policies also deter active promotion of tuition aid programs.

1) Tuition aid plans, used by only a monority of union members, tend to be deemphasized during collective bargaining in favor of benefits that earn greater support among the rank and file.
2) Seniority as the basis for job advancement inhibits development of education benefits tied to job promotions.
3) More highly educated workers are those likely to be promoted out of the bargaining unit.
4) It is easy for members to forget the union's role in winning tuition aid benefits, since most tuition aid programs are not only financed but also administered by the company.
5) The recession has made bargaining for education-related fringe benefits among others, secondary to securing economic gains and job security. Nonetheless, education remains a key union concern. The influx of younger workers into union ranks and the opportunity to obtain tuition aid dollars for participation in labor studies programs could be the impetus for a stronger bargaining emphasis on improving tuition aid programs. The study finding that plan users are more likely than non-users to be union activists indicates that greater use of tuition aid might increase the supply of educated, interested members for union work -- a plus for organizations depending, as unions do, on volunteer leaders at almost every level.

Finally, labor's long term interest in the educational welfare of its members and their families has resulted in creative union educational programs. The labor college held at the New York City headquarters of District Council 37, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the on-the-job educational counseling program established by the International Union of Electrical Workers are two examples of creative, innovative educational programs by labor unions.

Educational Institutions. Admissions, financial aid, curriculum and scheduling policies of many colleges and universities do not make it easy for working adults to pursue their educational goals. The traditional policies of educational institutions are oriented primarily to the needs of the younger full-time student. Until recently institutions of higher education frequently have remained isolated from both labor and industry. This has limited institutional access to and understanding of the needs of workers.

However, the strong competition for adult students expected by 1980 is beginning to be felt by educational institutions faced with declining enrollments among their traditional student population. In response. special programs have been introduced including weekend colleges, credit for life experience, and the location of courses on company sites and in union halls.

By 1980, increasing numbers of colleges and universities will reach out for students from the working population. Those schools that have begun the process of innovation to meet the special needs of working adults will be in a good position to help to develop new ways to facilitate worker use of tuition aid programs. Should the parties involved prove ready to resolve the practical contradictions inherent in promoting greater use of tuition aid programs, the barriers uncovered in the study, "Where Are The Women," can be addressed programatically. This requires cooperation between labor, management and educational institutions. Specialists in worker's education will need to bring to the effort their knowledge of the educational needs of workers as well as their long-standing ties both to educational institutions and labor organizations. In addition to proposing, implementing and testing experimental programs designed to encourage greater use of tuition aid, labor educators might play a key role in bringing representatives of labor, management, and education together to discuss ways to modify and improve tuition aid programs themselves.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Worker Reported Barriers:

Worker reported barriers are most amenable to programmatic redress, since many reasons for low tuition aid use are shared by both sexes, efforts to improve utilization benefits women and men alike.

A. Cost: The inability to afford the cost of returning to school is a key barrier for both men and women. Cost factors include paying the difference when refund plans cover only partial tuition; education-related costs such as carfare, meals, books, and child care, and advancing tuition money, with reimbursement a semester or more into the future. In some cases tuition refunds are taxed as income, considerably reducing the dollar value of the benefit.

These cost barriers could be reduced by union and company support for:

-- direct payment of tuition by companies to educational institutions. This would eliminate both the advance payment and tax burdens

-- Larger tuition aid benefits.

-- greater coverage of non-tuition educational costs.

-- provision for low-interest loans through credit unions, or special funds to help meet tuition costs and/or advance payments.

-- Elimination of the advance payment of tuition by the worker. The tuition plan would advance the money and students who do not complete their coursework successfully would repay tuition fees to the company.

Educational institutions can work with companies and unions to promote more effective use of tuition aid programs by:

— inviting direct tuition payments from companies.

— becoming familiar with tuition aid programs for which financial aid applicants might be eligible.

— assisting applicants for financial aid to explore tuition aid benefits as a resource.

Educational institutions also can help to reduce cost barriers by:

— equalizing all charges for part-time and full-time students.

— making financial aid equally available to part-time and full-time students.

— expanding credit for life experience.

— supporting government funding of part-time higher education (Lifelong Learning).

B. WORK SCHEDULES. Working overtime, or on a non-day shift, or in a second job keeps high proportions of men and women from using tuition aid plans to return to school. Irregular work hours make it impossible for many workers to attend college, given the class schedules of most educational institutions.

Working together, companies and unions can reduce job schedule barriers by supporting:

— on-site college credit courses offered after work hours.

— worker requests for shift changes needed to attend school.

— released time for study.

— flexible educational leave.

— shorter work weeks.

In addition to cooperating with companies and unions in the development of on-site courses, educational institutions might accommodate to the schedules of workers by:

— enhancing the prestige of night classes.

— offering more courses, especially prerequisites for degree work, in evening sessions.

-- making registration, academic and financial counseling, and other services more available in the evening.

-- developing concentrated programs that enable workers to use weekend colleges, short-term educational leave or vacations to complete a semester's work.

C. FEAR OF RETURNING TO SCHOOL AND UNCERTAIN EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS

These deter women workers in particular from using tuition aid, though many men report them as barriers too. Both of these barriers can be addressed through career counseling, developed either by companies and unions jointly or independently. Such a program might include:

-- short term workshops to reinforce the skills and confidence workers need to return to school.

-- a corps of tuition aid plan users who would share with other workers their experiences with tuition aid and educational institutions, and act as program recruiters.

-- career planning workshops to help workers identify their educational and occupational interests and to provide updated information about job opportunities both inside and outside the company.

-- individual career counseling on an as-needed basis.

-- union pressure extended to open promotional or upgrade opportunities to women.

By demonstrating responsiveness to the needs of part-time adult students, educational institutions also can play a key role in overcoming the fears of adults returning to school. In addition to scheduling classes and student services at convenient times and places, colleges and universities might

-- offer non-credit refresher courses in basic study skills to ease re-entry.

-- provide workshops for the re-entering adult student that supply information about the school and its supportive services;

-- develop credit courses especially relevant to the interests and needs of employed adults.

-- orient teachers to the educational and personal constraints of working adult as students.

The costs involved in developing, implementing and testing creative pilot programs in these areas probably could be met, in part, by seeking government grants or funds from private foundations.

D. JOB RELATED PROVISIONS. The restriction of tuition refund to courses relating directly to a worker's present or future job deters use of tuition aid programs. Company and union support for modifying this requirement could increase use of the program, especially among workers returning to school in order to change occupations, or to satisfy personal development needs with a general Arts or Science degree. In cooperation with unions and companies, educational institutions might develop courses that meet more of the job-related education requirements of employees.

E. TRANSPORTATION. Lack of transportation combined with a fear of traveling alone at night keep many women from returning to school. Companies, unions and educational institutions could remedy this, for some at least, through credit courses on company or union premises; by encouraging the organization of car pools to educational programs; and by pressuring for improved community transportation services.

II: Socioeconomic Barriers and Unmet Expectations: Barriers stemming from the lack of opportunities for job promotion for disadvantaged workers are deeply embedded in internal labor markets, and are difficult to correct. However, to ignore them is to discourage from use of tuition aid programs the greatest number of non-users who are also those most in need of further education.

How can tuition aid use be improved for workers at the bottom of the occupational pyramid? Recommendations include: company and union support for designing longer job ladders; lateral shifting of jobs; increased and advanced publicity about areas of intended job expansion within the company; elimination of sex-typed occupational categories; employment of more women in non-traditional jobs; encouragement of occupational change as well as promotion as a means of job advancement; and elimination of all race and sex discrimination in hiring, upgrading and promotion processes.

Companies and labor unions alike report minimal tuition aid program publicity. Since lack of information about the program is a barrier primarily for disadvantaged workers, high priority should be given to publicity beamed particularly to these groups. These recommendations are intended to connect the use of tuition aid more directly to the job gains that are sought by workers. If implemented they might reduce somewhat the discrepancy between worker expectations and program outcome, a key deterrent to tuition aid use.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has reported on a study seeking to uncover some of the major reasons why workers employed in three different plants covered by three different union agreements and participating in three different tuition refund programs all under-use the plans. Increasing tuition aid program use is complex; this study suggests that major policy changes and significant costs in time, money and effort would be involved. However, non-users are those workers most in need of more education. Once motivated, this study indicates that for at least 25% of the workers, education becomes addictive, and a return to school leads to participation in further education.[5]

The affirmative action implications in the findings of this study are present for companies seeking to advance women and minorities from within their ranks, and for unions wanting to develop more female and minority leadership from their membership. Women and minorities need programmatic remedies to encourage their utilization of tuition aid. That these do work has been demonstrated by the success of the company-endorsed Career Development Women's Studies program initiated by the Institute for Education and Research on Women and Work, a credit program financed through tuition aid monies for women in white collar and clerical jobs, and a similar Public Service Women's Studies for those in the civil service. Though no promise of job advancement has been made, the program is over-subscribed at every one of the four locations where it is offered. This should provide a pool of motivated, better-educated workers from which management can fill its affirmative action goals when and as jobs open.

Unions can find reassurance in the knowledge that use of tuition aid is tied to union activity: some 32% of women who have used tuition refund programs were found in this study to be active in their unions compared to 14 percent of women who had not used such programs.[6] Education for personal development can lead to self-fulfillment through union and community involvement where jobs may offer little advancement opportunity.

For labor educators and those in adult and continuing education, working closely with companies and unions on pilot and experimental programs that expedite utilization of tuition aid indeed holds much promise.

Footnotes

1. Seymour Lusterman, Education and Industry, The Conference Board, Inc. New York, 1977, p. 11.

2. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Characteristics Of Major Collective Bargaining Agreements, July, 1, 1974, Bulletin 1888, Washington, D.C., 1975, p. 71, T. 7. 3.

3. Roger, O'Meara, Combatting Knowledge Obsolescence--Employee Tuition Aid Plans, National Industrial Conference Board, New York, 1970, p. 93.

4. Peter Botsman, An Analysis of the Continuing Education Interests and Needs of Blue Collar Factory Workers, Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education, Department of Education, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, May 1975, p. 61; National Advisory Council on Extension and Continuing Education, Equity of Access: Continuing Education and the Part-Time Student (ninth annual report) Washington, D.C., March 31, 1975, p. 17.

5. Mimi Abramovitz, Where Are the Women? A Study of the Underutilization of Tuition Refund Plans, Institute for Education and Research on Women and Work, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, New York, New York, December 1977, p. 6. ibid., p. viii.

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